



**MEMO**

**TO:** House Criminal Justice Committee Members

**FROM:** Michigan Retailers Association

**SUBJECT:** SB 191

**DATE:** May 1, 2015

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Michigan Retailers Association is the unified voice of Michigan's retail industry and represents more than 15,000 storefronts and websites across the state. MRA supports SB 191 because it would give law enforcement additional incentive and resources to address the ongoing problem of retail fraud.

Nearly every retailer has been a victim of retail fraud. Examples of retail fraud include stealing merchandise – done both by employees (often referred as backroom shrink) and by members of the public – as well as attempts to alter the price of an item. While retail fraud occurs more often in some places than others, all retailers rely on support from law enforcement to keep patrons in their store safe and to protect the retailer from theft and vandalism.

Law enforcement is often spread pretty thin. There are numerous crimes and public safety concerns law enforcement officers must address every day. Allowing the courts to pursue reimbursement for expenses incurred by the state or a local unit of government in relation to retail fraud would help provide more assistance to law enforcement officers responding to crimes committed in a retail setting.

The courts may already seek reimbursement for several other crimes, including: moving violations causing death; operating a vehicle, watercraft, ORV, snowmobile, aircraft or train while intoxicated; reckless driving; filing false reports of crimes, medical or other emergencies; and violating a personal protection order or foreign protection order. The addition of retail fraud to a list of other crimes that require the perpetrator to take personal responsibility for his or her actions just makes sense.

If local law enforcement is able to recover the cost associated with investigating retail fraud cases from the perpetrators, some local units may be able to add extra shifts or even hire additional staff, putting more officers on the street and creating a safer environment for the entire community. Due to the potential to increase public safety efforts and reduce response times associated with recovering the costs from retail fraud, MRA supports SB 191 and urges the committee to approve the legislation.

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